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District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

### **Sericea Lespedeza – Slowing the Spread**

The last page of the *KSU Chemical Weed Control Guide* has traditionally been dedicated to a single weed: sericea lespedeza. It's no wonder. Sericea is considered a Category C weed, meaning it's well established in large or extensive populations. That's unfortunately accurate.

If you're familiar with sericea lespedeza, the broadleaf legume sticks out like a sore thumb against desirable forages. If you're a grassland manager and *don't* know what it looks like, now is a great time to learn. One great resource is a website called *Kansas Wildflowers and Native Grasses*. Visit <https://kswildflower.org/index.php> and type Sericea in the search box to get not only a plant description, but some helpful pictures as well.

If you find it on your property, the vegetative stage it is currently in provides a good control window. Effective vegetative state herbicides include triclopyr based products (Remedy Ultra is triclopyr alone; PastureGard HL is triclopyr plus fluroxypyr) or Surmount, a mix of triclopyr and fluroxypyr (Surmount is a restricted use pesticide). Once sericea starts to branch (plants sometimes reach three feet or more in height), consider products containing the active ingredient metsulfuron (Escort XP and others). Products can be used as spot treatments or broadcast applied. Always read and follow label directions.

Labels *will* include application rates, but other quick references can help as well. The *2024 KSU Weed Control Guide* (<https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/chemweedguide.pdf>) is a great start. Additional spot treatment recommendations can be found in a recent KSU Agronomy eUpdate article: <https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/article/early-summer-control-of-sericea-lespedeza-using-herbicides-592-3>. Both are available upon request from any District Office.

Your local Noxious Weed Department is also a great resource. They can help you not only with product selection and purchase, but many have product rate quick reference charts, too. Their local focus on noxious weeds means they should be a part of your control efforts.

Sericea isn't typically controlled by a single application in a single year. Sometimes it takes multiple products and multiple methods, including anything from multiple spot treatment applications through the year (herbicides often reduce stands to the point spot treatments can be used in the future but will likely be needed on a regular basis to keep the weed in check) to combinations of prescribed fire with herbicides or even mowing or grazing with goats. The weed's invasive nature and large seed bank requires continued attention to reduce its spread. Feel free to drop us a line if any of these resources can help.

Ross Mosteller  
District Extension Agent, Livestock & Natural Resources

## Face Flies

It could just be me being bugged (*please excuse the Dad pun*) but one of the most annoying and economically damaging pests on a livestock operation are flies. It is often not the fly itself causing economic damage, but the infection of other organisms that are transmitted from the fly feeding activity on livestock. Several different types of flies can create countless different issues for livestock, but today we'll start at the head and discuss face flies, especially as they relate to pinkeye.

Face flies are pests of livestock animals such as beef and dairy cattle, as well as horses. Livestock react to fly feeding by bunching, sheltering in trees or standing in open bodies of water to avoid the flies. As a result of fly feeding, animals exhibit a variety of defensive behaviors such as; head tosses, tail switching, and bunching together with their heads facing inwards to avoid attacking flies.

The face fly is a full-bodied fly that resembles the house fly in appearance. Like the house fly, they have a sponging type of mouth and feed on animal secretions, nectar, and dung liquids. It is the female face fly that will be found clustering around an animal's eyes, mouth, and muzzle - causing extreme annoyance and irritation. Females also feed on blood and other secretions around open wounds. Face flies are present throughout the summer, but populations usually peak in late July, August, and early September. Adult face flies can live 20 to 50 days and are prolific egg layers.

Female face flies lay their eggs in fresh dung pats. As the larvae complete their development, they leave the dung pat and burrow into the surrounding soil where they develop into the pupal stage. The complete life cycle can be completed in usually 18 to 20 days depending on temperatures. The number of face fly generations per year can reach up to 10, especially the further south in latitude they are found. As temperatures start to cool and day length shortens in late summer and fall, both sexes aggregate on sunny sides of structures. They will work their way into cracks and crevices where they overwinter as adults, usually in areas such as attics, lofts, and walls of buildings, until temperatures are warm enough to draw them out in spring.

One to five face flies per eye per day can cause serious ocular lesions that mimic the symptoms of bovine pinkeye. Mechanical damage, whether sustained by face fly mouth parts, dust, weed, pollen, or excessive sunlight, predisposes the eye for infection and increases epithelial discharges or eye watering. Infectious bovine keratoconjunctivitis (IBK), also known as pinkeye, is a common eye disease of cattle caused by numerous bacteria carried by face flies. Clinical signs of IBK are excessive tearing, eye inflammation/ swelling, cloudiness in the cornea, and ulceration. Animals with IBK may exhibit weight loss, impaired vision, eye scarring, and blindness.

Control strategies for face flies include insecticide ear tags, dust bags, oilers/rubs, pour-ons, sprays, insect growth regulators (IGRs), and air-projected capsules. Control methods that target the head area of an animal are the most effective. Non-chemical control methods include walk-through traps, sticky traps, and conservation of beneficial insects such as predatory dung-inhabiting beetles. Commercial and autogenous IBK vaccines are also available to help manage IBK and if used, should be administered before animals are sent to summer pasture. Please consult with your veterinarian about the use of these vaccines. Most effective prevention and control strategies involve multiple approaches.

As summer progresses, we'll look at some other problematic flies. K-State has an excellent resource in Dr. Cassandra Olds, Extension Veterinary Entomologist who has an excellent website devoted to livestock pests. To learn more about this pest, reference the K-State Research and Extension publication "Face Flies" MF-3611 found on the KSRE Bookstore or in your local Extension Office.

May 17, 2024

Laura Phillips  
District Extension Agent, Horticulture

No news article this week.

Teresa Hatfield  
District Extension Agent, Family and Community Wellness

## **Stay Sun Smart: Guard Against Skin Cancer**

School is out, and summer is almost here. Many of us will spend more time outdoors and in the sun, but with this exposure to sunlight comes an increased risk of skin cancer. I recently made a trip to my dermatologist to have my doctor check a mole that I consider suspicious. It turns out the mole was a benign lesion, and I had nothing to worry about. Growing up in the 70s and 80s, my sister and I often spent a fair amount outside in the summer, swimming, fishing, and, yes, even sunbathing. Now I understand that all those hours in the sun were not good for my unprotected skin. We are now much more aware of the damage that can be done to our skin by the sun. Unfortunately, this damage puts us at risk of developing skin cancer.

May is skin cancer awareness month, so it is an excellent time to consider the dangers of skin cancer, how we can prevent it, and how to detect cancer early. Skin cancer is one of the most common types of cancer; one in five Americans will be diagnosed with a type of skin cancer in their lifetime. There are three types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and malignant melanoma. Of the three types of skin cancer, melanoma is the most serious type of skin cancer. Basal cell and squamous cell cancer can still be dangerous but are less lethal than melanoma.

Your best bet to avoid cancer is to try and prevent it from occurring. Sun damage adds up over time, beginning in childhood. A large amount of skin damage from the sun happens before a person is 18 years old. What are some things we can do to protect ourselves and our families?

- Avoid the sun's rays from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., when they are the strongest.
- Protection from the sun is also needed on cloudy days, as 80% of the sun's ultraviolet light reaches the Earth.
- Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher. Reapply after two hours and after swimming or sweating.
- Use protective clothing such as wide-brim hats, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and UV-blocking sunglasses.
- Enjoy being outside by seeking a shady spot outside.
- Avoid going to a tanning bed.

Many of us have experienced damage to our skin, so we must get in the habit of examining our skin for signs of skin cancer. Sun damage often takes up to 30 years or more to show up. Once a month, check for unusual blemishes, sores, or discolorations. Other things to look for are:

- Spots or lesions that bleed or do not heal.
- Precancerous spots that are reddish-brown with a scaly crust.
- Changes in moles: color, shape, size, irritation, pain, or itching.
- Asymmetry: One-half of the mole is unlike the other half.
- Border irregularity: The mole edges are ragged, notched, or blurred.
- Color: Pigmentation is not uniform. Shades of tan, brown, and black with red, white, and blue dashes.
- Diameter: Any mole or growth larger than a pencil eraser.

Report any of these findings to your doctor.

Enjoy the summer, but try to do so safely. By taking preventative actions now, we can continue enjoying our outdoor activities.

May 17, 2024

Cindy Williams  
District Extension Agent, Food, Nutrition, Health and Safety

### **Looking for Summer Experiences for Your Child---Consider Kids a Cookin' Camp!**

Area schools are out and time for fun summer activities. One fun activity that I hope you will consider having your child attend is the "Kids a Cookin' Camp" that will be held at the June 3, 4 and 5, at the Oskaloosa Methodist Church, which is located at 702 Liberty. This camp is for ages 9-13 years of age and will be held from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m., each day.

This three-session cooking camp teaches kids how to select and prepare healthier food options from scratch. Kids will learn basic cooking skills, kitchen safety, and the connection between agriculture and food! This fun-filled camp is offered free of charge through the donations from the Oskaloosa Methodist Church, Oskaloosa Methodist Women in Faith, American Family Life Insurance, Waters Hardware and Meadowlark Extension District.

To register for this camp, do so online at <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/4-h/oskaloosa.html>  
There is limited enrollment so register now!

Camp schedule: (subject to change without notice)

- Monday, June 3: "Seeds of all Size"---seeds, trail mix, and bird feeder
- Tuesday, June 4: "Grains of Wheat"---sifting, measuring, and cooking
- Wednesday, June 5: "Growing Plants to Eat"---planting and nibbling

We look forward to seeing your child attend this Cooking Camp. If you have questions, contact Cindy Williams, at 785-863-2212.